



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2914.0.55.002 - 2006 Census of Population and Housing: Media Releases and Fact Sheets, 2006

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 27/06/2007 First Issue

MEDIA FACT SHEET

June 27, 2007

Embargoed 9.30 am (AEST)

70/2007

The difference explained: comparing the Census population count and the estimated resident population

The 2006 Census counted 19,855,289 Australian residents on Census night, an increase of 11.8% since the 1996 Census.

Earlier this month the Australian Bureau of Statistics released the official estimate of Australia's population – the estimated resident population (ERP). This estimated that there were 20,701,500 people usually resident in Australia as at 30 June 2006.

These figures are different for good reason.

The Census counted whoever was in Australia, wherever they happened to be, on Census Night (8 August 2006) – a frozen snapshot in time. However the estimated resident population figure takes into account the wider picture and moves people back to where they live. For example, Australians temporarily overseas are not counted in the Census, but they are accounted-for in the estimated resident population figures.

Because they are comprehensive, the estimated resident population figures are used as the official population estimate.

The estimated resident population as at 30 June 2006 used the 2006 Census counts as a base. The count was adjusted to exclude temporary overseas visitors in Australia. Then these figures were adjusted to include Australian residents temporarily overseas on Census Night as well as an estimate of people not counted on Census Night. Finally, the estimates took into account births, deaths and migration that occurred between 30 June 2006 and Census Night – 8 August 2006.

Official population estimates are used to determine the number of seats each state and territory has in the House of Representatives, as stipulated in Section 24 of the Constitution and the *Commonwealth Electoral Act, 1918*, and this is why the ABS must, by law, carry out a census every five years. Official population estimates are also used in the distribution of Commonwealth funds to state and territory governments, funds which are used for the provision of a wide range of services.

NB: The figures in this fact sheet exclude overseas visitors. Where an answer to a question has not been provided (i.e. not stated) these occurrences form a separate category in the data and therefore some percentages do not total to 100%.

Source: ABS 2006 Census.

Table 1. 2006 Census: usual residence census counts by state and territory

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.(a)
Population	6 549 172	4 932 422	3 904 534	1 514 339	1 959 088	476 481	192 899	324 034	19 855 289
% change 1996-2006	9.0	11.7	20.2	5.4	14.8	2.6	10.0	8.4	11.8

(a) Australia's total includes Other Territories.

Table 2. 2006 Census: usual residence census counts by capital city(a)

	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Darwin	Canberra
Population	4 119 190	3 592 591	1 763 131	1 105 839	1 445 078	200 525	105 991	323 056
% change 1996-2006	10.8	13.8	19.6	5.3	16.4	4.9	35.2	8.4

(a) Capital City Statistical Division.

Table 3. Estimated Resident Population figures as at 31 December 2006 (latest available figures)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.(a)
Population	6 854 848	5 165 404	4 132 015	1 575 714	2 080 966	491 666	212 551	336 444	20 851 997
% Annual growth(b)	0.9	1.5	2.0	1.0	2.1	0.6	1.8	1.2	1.4

(a) Australia's total includes Other Territories.

(b) Growth for calendar year 2006.

This page last updated 27 June 2007

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